

6. Receive Update on Involvement With San Joaquin River Blueway Nomination Committee With Letter of Support for San Joaquin River Blueway.

Summary: The San Joaquin River Partnership, a non-profit environmental collaborative, developed a San Joaquin River Blueway Vision and are pursuing National Blueway designation for the San Joaquin River – from the Friant Dam to its mouth in the Delta. A National Blueway is a nationally significant river and its watershed, recognized for having a diverse stakeholder partnership committed to integrative and adaptive management in land and water management that sustains working lands, natural resources, and outdoor recreation. This program would include increased public access and water based recreation opportunities along the San Joaquin River, that could support the Delta Trail system which the Delta Protection Commission was mandated to prepare a plan for through SB 1556 (Torlakson). Commission staff have provided advisory comments on the process to date.

A letter of support has been prepared for the Blueway nomination (attached).

DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION

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Business, Transportation and
Housing

Department of Food and
Agriculture

Natural Resources Agency

State Lands Commission

Ms. Rebecca Wodder
Senior Advisor to the Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

January 25, 2013

Dear Ms. Wodder:

On behalf of the Delta Protection Commission (Commission), I am writing in support for the nomination of the San Joaquin River as a National Blueway. The San Joaquin River Partnership developed a "San Joaquin River Blueway Vision":

The San Joaquin River Blueway is a mosaic of parks, wildlife refuges, and other publicly accessible places providing the public an opportunity to explore and enjoy the San Joaquin River from its headwaters to the Delta. The Blueway connects San Joaquin Valley residents to our shared natural and cultural heritage, to recreational opportunities, and to each other. A regional and statewide asset, the San Joaquin River Blueway fosters health, strengthens community ties, enhances learning, reflects our pride of place, and supports restoration and conservation efforts along the river.

The San Joaquin River is a natural and cultural treasure, important to a wide variety of fish and wildlife species who depend on it, as well as to people who utilize it for water, transportation, recreation, and more. As the second largest river in the State of California, the San Joaquin River extends 330 miles from its headwaters in the Sierra Nevada to its confluence with the Sacramento River in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

The Delta Protection Commission (Commission) oversees land use in the Delta, and also manages programs to recognize, enhance, and promote the Delta's natural, agricultural, and recreational resources. The Commission's *Economic Sustainability Plan for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta* (2012) recommends the enhancement of Delta waterways and the expansion of public access to natural areas as a means to help sustain the region's recreation and tourism economy. Designation of the San Joaquin River as a Blueway would have tremendous benefit in encouraging opportunities

for people who live in the San Joaquin Valley and Californians from across the state to utilize and appreciate the River.

SB 1556 (Torlakson) mandated the Commission with the developing a plan and implementation program for a continuous recreation corridor, known as the Great California Delta Trail, which would extend throughout the Delta. The landscape of the Delta provides challenges for the development of land trails due to it being a predominately agricultural region, with narrow levee roads. Therefore water trails are being considered as a means to ensure trail continuity throughout the Delta, and the San Joaquin River Blueway could provide a key opportunity for this purpose.

Once again, the Delta Protection Commission supports the nomination of the San Joaquin River as a National Blueway. Please contact the Commission office at (916) 375-4800 with any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Michael Machado", with a stylized circular flourish at the end.

Michael Machado
Executive Director